Principal Leadership Style, Stress, and School Performance in Bedouin Schools in Israel

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This research explores the relationship between the principals' leadership styles, stress, and school performance in Bedouin schools in Israel. Data were gathered from 303 teachers in Bedouin primary, junior high, and high schools in Bedouin, Israel. The outcomes indicated that there was a non-significant positive very weak association between the level of principals' stress and each of the three leadership styles: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and a non-significant very weak correlation can be found between principals' stress levels and the level of school performance.

Keywords: Bedouin, principal's leadership style, stress, performance, the inverted-U curve

Introduction

Successful school leadership is leadership with a vision that influences the employees in the organization to achieve the goals and objectives of the school, and without it, the school's achievements are impossible. As a result, the school's success is a success of the school principal and teachers, who have ensured effective learning and achievement in the students. According to Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsay, (2021), school leadership is important for a host of important school productivity, including student achievement and performance. The concept of leadership and stress are important concepts for a healthy, optimal, and productive organization and usually maintains balance with moderate stress on teachers and increases their well-being. In addition, leadership style is related to stress in the organization, and stress affects performance in the organization. An imbalance in stress at work creates harmful physical and emotional responses when the job requirements do not match the employee's capabilities. Hence, school principals in the Bedouin sector should remember that the success of students and the school in general is related to the educational approach used at the school. Using high pressure lowers the performance of the school, causing negative stress, decreased functioning, depression, and burnout. On the other hand, when under low stress, the level of performance will decrease. For this reason, they must maintain a moderate pressure approach and good working conditions with the teachers in the organization. This research investigates the principals' leadership styles, stress, and school performance in Bedouin schools in Israel.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Leadership

The leader's central role is to lead the team to "victory" through basic principles such as creating coaching,

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cohesion, initiative, and personal consideration (Gonen & Zakai, 1999). Leadership is the ability to influence, or a process of influence that represents the main element that characterises the leader in his attempt to lead others to achieve a common group goal (Bogler, 2009). In recent years, researchers have addressed a number of types of leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership (Avolio & Bass, 1991). According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership includes four characteristics: intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, idealized behavior, and individualized consideration. Transformational leadership highlights the importance of influencing employees to direct the activities of subordinates to achieve the goals and objectives within the organization. It is a leadership style that supports its employees. According to Chauhan et al. (2019, p. 92) transformational leadership and creative leadership support creativity and innovation and inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

According to Bruns (1978), a leader with a transactional style cannot be a transformational leader. That means two dichotomous leadership styles are not on one continuum. Transactional leadership emphasizes the transaction between leaders and colleagues. This leadership is based on requirements and tasks to accomplish and presents rewards in order to achieve outcomes (Baysak & Yener, 2015, p. 81). Therefore, a type of transactional leader utilizes the system based on rewarding his followers and thereby motivates them on the basis of reward. The motivation generated by the reward lasts for a short period of time rather than the long term. Thus, transactional leaders, on the one hand, strive for enhanced levels of performance successfully, but, on the other hand, their followers do not perceive increased levels of stress (Rowold & Schlotz, 2009). Nonetheless, the transformational leader with a transactional style is different from laissez-faire leadership due to its basis, this leadership will not be able to create a supportive and effective work environment and is based on the absence of a deal in leadership.

According to Abbasi (2018, p. 4), laissez-faire leadership represents the lowest level; the leader avoids making decisions, does not use authority, lacks responsibility and is more passive, takes no action, and waits for problems to arise. In addition, laissez-faire leadership has been associated with negative outcomes like ineffectiveness, most destructive, demotivation, and stress.

Work Stress

Stress refers to the mental and physical state that affects a person's output rather than work, quality of work, personal efficiency, and health (Comish & Swindle, 1994). Others see stress at work as an employee's state of mind that evokes exaggerated and deviant demands (Reddy & Anuradha, 2013). Then, Sutherland and Cooper (1990) found that work stress is a major problem and can lead to burnout, poor performance, and high absenteeism. Work-associated stress levels have negative consequences when they negatively influence people's well-being and health (McGowan et al., 2006). The negative effects of stress at work can cause headaches, heart disease, low productivity at work, job dissatisfaction, multiple absences from work, and poor quality of work output (Dua, 1994). According to Rahul et al. (2019, p. 92) work stress means that the employee is experiencing physical or psychological disorders in dealing with a job.

The Influence of Leadership Style on Stress Work

According to Abbasi (2018, p. 8), a transformational leadership style will help to lower the negative influence of role stressors. Therefore, transformational leadership and stress have a negative relationship. According to Zopiatis and Constanti (2010, p. 313), transformational leadership has an important positive

impact on personal achievement and is negatively associated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Furthermore, transformational leadership increases health, productivity, and well-being. According to Singh (2019), there is a link between transformational and transactional leadership styles and job stress. In addition, transformational leaders' behavior does not lead to higher levels of perceived chronic stress in followers (Rowold & Schlotz, 2008). The stress of the teacher at work is also affected by the school principal's leadership style. According to Corrigan, Diwan, Campion, and Rashid (2002, p. 105) transformational leadership has an overall positive influence on teachers' functioning and they feel diminished burnout in organizational culture.

In contrast, transactional leadership shows benefits, though only for conditional reward, and some studies indicate a positive correlation between transactional leadership and conditional reward (Erskine & Georgiou 2017, p 340). However, it is worth noting that even for conditional rewards, the outcomes are not always positive and exception management, whether active or passive, has shown poor outcomes (Erskine & Georgiou 2017, p 34). In addition, transactional leadership found a significant positive correlation with personal achievement and a negative but insignificant or poor correlation with both depersonalization and emotional exhaustion (Zopiatis & Constanti 2010, p. 313). Also, Skakon et al. (2010) found that transformational leadership is strongly linked to good employee outcomes, while laissez-faire leadership and transactional leadership have less of a link to employee outcomes.

Laissez-faire leadership, on the other hand, has a negative impact on health and well-being (Abbasi, 2018, p. 8; Erskine & Georgiou, 2017, p. 34), whereas laissez-faire leadership has a positive impact (Baysak & Yener, 2015, p. 86). In addition, a positive relationship exists between laissez-faire leadership and depersonalization and emotional exhaustion (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2010, p. 313).

Principals' Stress and School Performance

Many factors are involved in the pressure on school principals and its impact on teacher satisfaction, which, after all, affects school performance. A stressed principal makes teachers stressed at work. According to Moody and Barrett (2009) the stress of the principals and teachers had a negative effect on the students and on learning in general. Work stress is a major problem and can lead to burnout, poor performance, and high absenteeism (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990). School principals are key figures in the design of an organization that supports teachers and promotes student achievement, indicating that they are multi-role performers and often under stress. Principals may also experience job inability when they realize the lack of leadership and experience to meet mission requirements under stress (Brimm, 1983). In contrast to negative stress, positive stress improves performance at work and improves job satisfaction. Based on this principle, stress should be stimulated moderately, not excessively. Based on Yerkes-Dodson's Curve Law Theory (Jarinto, 2010), this means that not enough stimulation leads to not enough motivational drive, while too much stimulation causes mental illness.

Yerkes-Dodson's Curve Law Theory

According to Yerkes and Dodson (1908), there is an optimal amount of arousal for performance. When a person is not aroused, he performs poorly and when stress (arousal) increases, the person's performance improves. However, when the amount of arousal reaches a certain threshold, performance decreases. In general, practitioners show this relationship as an inverted U-shaped curve. See Figure 1 below.
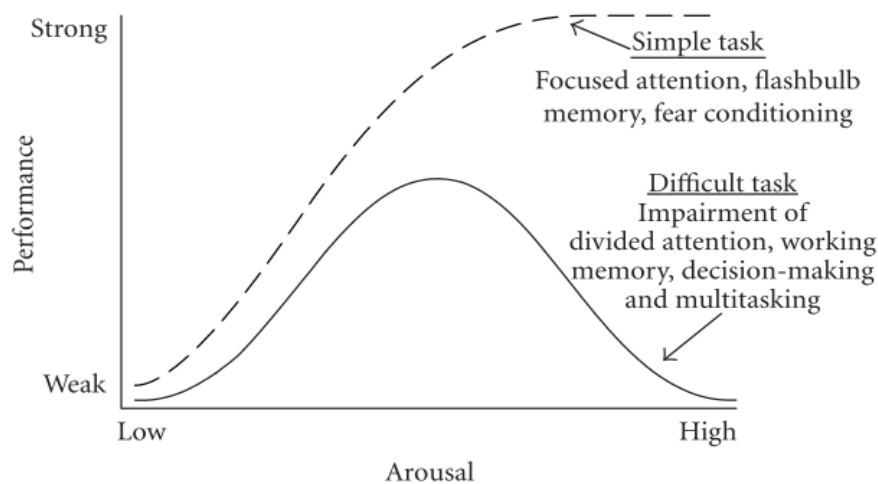
Figure 1. The inverted-U curve (Diamond, Campbell, Park, Halonen, & Zoladz, 2007).

High and low stress levels should lead to the lowest productivity (Baraza, Simatwa, & Gogo, 2016). When the amount of arousal reaches a certain threshold, stress is created by the body's reactions while trying to maintain balance and meet the demands of life (Chitty, 2005), burdening his resources and endangering his well-being (Lazarus, 1981). High levels of stress can lead to burnout, which in turn can lead to emotional exhaustion, de-personalization, and a reduction of personal feelings of achievement (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Work stress is a major problem and can lead to burnout, poor performance, and high absenteeism (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990). Work-related stress levels have negative consequences when they negatively affect people's health and well-being (McGowan et al., 2006).

Similarly, overloading at work affects principals' satisfaction and organizational performance so that their desire to retire from their principals' role arises (Kukemelk & Bedi, 2018). However, the principal's behavior is the main factor that affects teachers' feelings, such as respect, satisfaction, psychological pressure, morale, organizational commitment, self-ability, or deterioration (Lambersky, 2016). In addition, the concept of stress is defined among teachers as an experience of unpleasant emotions such as anxiety, frustration, depression, and anger resulting from the teachers' work (Kyriacou, 1987). Work pressure has been shown to be closely related to teachers' staff health outcomes (stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue), most often about the results of the work and little organizational commitment (Thorsteinsson, Brown, & Richards, 2014). Therefore, we delve to present the Yerkes-Dodson law as well as its relationship between performance and stress for school principals in Bedouin schools.

The Research Hypotheses

H1: There are negative relationship between transformational leadership and principal's stress.

H2: There are positive relationship between transactional leadership and principal's stress.

H3: There are negative relationship between laissez-fair leadership and principal's stress.

H4: There is a positive relationship between principal's stress and schools performance.

The leadership style of school principals is related to the stress level in the organization and also to the performance of the school. Based on the above hypotheses, the conceptual framework of this study is presented as follows (Figure 2):
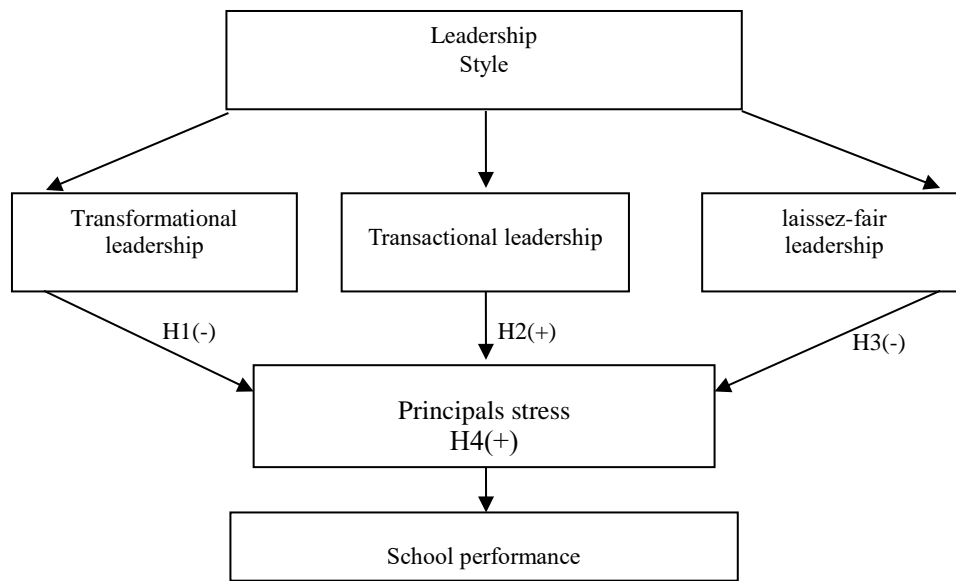
Figure 2. Conceptual framework.

Results

The outcomes of this study were collected from 303 schools teachers in Bedouin primary school, junior high school, and high schools in Bedouin south of Israel. The research included two questionnaires. The first, MLQ-X5, Multi-Factor Leadership questionnaire was developed by Avolio and Bass (1991), and is based on a previous research work by (Alasad, 2017). The second, "Teacher satisfaction questionnaire", was adopted by Alsahli (2017). Additionally, the researcher added items in teacher satisfaction questionnaire to adapt it to the study population in this study. In the third part, questions associated to the school's evaluated performance level were added by the researcher.

Background Variables

Three hundred and three (303) male and female teaches participated in this study. They responded to both of leadership styles and teacher satisfaction questionnaire and school's evaluated performance level. The majority of the participants were: female (50.2%), worked in junior schools (47.2%), bachelor degree (45.2%), master's degree (49.8%), PhD degree (5%), Original Domicile Place: south of Israel (59%), while the rest of them were from north of Israel; age (less than 30 years old, 23.8%), 31-40 (22.1%), 41-50 (33%), while, the rest of them were of ages more than 50 years; experience in education: less than 10 years of experience (38%), more than 20 years (34.7%).

According to Table 1 below, results of the Pearson correlations summarized in Table 1 indicated that there was a non-significant positive very weak association between level principals stress and each of the three leader ship styles: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-fair leadership (r (301) = 0.004, p = 0.939, r (301) = 0.025, p = 0.663, r (301) = 0.018, p = 0.752).

Table 1

Relation Between Principals' Leadership Styles Level of Principals' Stress

Scale		Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership	Laissez-fair leadership
Level of principals stress	Pearson correlation	0.004	0.025	0.018
	p-value	0.470	0.331	0.376
	N	301	301	301

According to Table 2 below Results of the Pearson correlations, a non-significant very weak correlation can be found between principals' stress level and level of school performance.

Table 2

Relationship Between Level of School Performance, and Principals' Stress

Scale	Pearson correlation	Sig. (1-tailed)
Principals' stress level	0.022	0.354

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between the principal's leadership styles, stress, and school performance in Bedouin schools in Israel. The first hypothesis, which expects a negative relationship between transformational leadership and the principal's stress, has been rejected because the outcome is not statistically significant and there was a non-significant positive very weak association between the level of principal's stress and transformational leadership. Previous studies (Ekmekci, Camgoz, Guney, & Oktem, 2021, p. 36; Corrigan et al., 2002, p. 105; Abbasi, 2018, p. 8; Zopiatis & Constanti 2010, p. 313; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000) contradict this finding. According to literature on transformational leadership, it is leadership that sets a behavioral model and morals, increases professional commitment, encourages subordinates to perform well, considers others, and maintains moderate pressure on the employees, and is negatively associated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. According to these characteristics, we can conclude that it is able to reduce the level of stress and fatigue of teachers to a moderate level and increase their health, productivity, and well-being. But the situation in the Bedouin schools is different since the Bedouin culture is a minority in the State of Israel, characterized by a patriarchal culture. This minority is characterized by its own laws and also has an impact on the appointment of school principals in the south. In addition, most schools have teachers from relatives or the same family, which creates limits for the principals in the Bedouin sector, thus causing concealed stress that couldn't be felt. Accordingly, stress and transformational leadership at work are influenced by the Bedouin culture. In addition, principals in the Bedouin sector do not adopt transformational leadership to motivate teachers towards the goals and performance of the school through positive stress. This lack of relationship tells us that the relationship between the formative leadership in the Bedouin sector and the stress at work means the school results will be better. According to Arifin (2020, p. 240), choosing a leadership style that includes stress management for employees will significantly improve employee performance.

In light of the above, traditional cultural values affect the organizational structure in the Bedouin community, especially in the relationship between the school principal and teachers. In this context, there is no stress at work. This perception is different from the education system in the Jewish community in Israel. Even in secular countries where leaders adopt a leadership style regardless of culture, leadership style is related to stress levels.

The second hypothesis, which expects a positive relationship between transactional leadership and the principal's stress, has been rejected. The outcomes of the research show that there is a non-significant positive, very weak association between the level of principals' stress and transactional leadership. This finding ran counter to previous studies (Singh, 2019; Rowold & Schlotz, 2009, p. 43). Transactional leadership usually motivates teachers in the Bedouin sector to achieve goals and receive rewards. When they achieve the goals, it can be explained that there is no stress and they have job satisfaction without punishment. This might also be explained by the Bedouin culture, since most school principals in the Bedouin sector do not punish the teachers on their part. Because as the reward increases, the stress rises. Therefore, if the principal's stress is high, we talk about punishment because the stress is high.

The third hypothesis, which expects a negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and the principal's stress, has been rejected. There is a non-significant positive, very weak association between level principals' stress and laissez-faire leadership. This finding contradicted previous research (George, Chiba, & Scheepers, 2017; Rowold & Schlotz, 2009. p. 43). It is expected that there will be no stress on school principals in the Bedouin sector, because the Bedouin culture is parental. According to Abu-Saad and Hendrex (1995) the patriarchal leadership style is a result of tribal family traditions. In addition, the teachers in the Bedouin school rely on values and unquestionable obedience as a result of paternal leadership and passivity. Therefore, this leadership increases the stress on the teachers. According to Ekmekci et al. (2021, p. 360), laissez-faire leadership has increased stress among employees, such as problems in the workplace. According to Alasad (2017, p. 163), teachers in the Bedouin sector face many challenges that belong to traditional society. For these reasons, they need support from the school principal. Therefore, this leadership reflects any attempt not to influence but to increase stress among teachers who do not receive support or guidance. Hence, only the stress of teachers increases due to leadership laissez-faire. The concept of stress is defined among teachers as an experience of unpleasant emotions such as depression, anxiety, and anger resulting from the teacher's work (Kyriacou, 1987). The lack of intervention by the principal, who is termed as a poor leader because of loneliness, and the commands to his subordinates make him fear that he does not cooperate with them. Such workplace events as described above have various emotional and negative consequences for teachers in the Bedouin sector. Therefore, principals in the Bedouin sector must be able to work with moderate stress.

The fourth hypothesis, which expects that there is a positive relationship between a principal's stress and school performance, has been rejected. There is a non-significant, very weak correlation that can be found between principals' stress level and the level of school performance. Rejecting previous hypotheses about the relationship between leadership styles and principal stress, it also supports the fourth hypothesis that there is no relationship between a school principal's stress level and performance. This finding shows that there is no relationship between the principal's stress and the school's performances at Bedouin School. It should be noted that principals in Bedouin do not use stress or positive stress to improve performance at school. According to Datt and Washington (2015), positive stress is defined as a healthy thing that leads to a sense of accomplishment. Based on the principle that stress should be stimulated moderately, not excessively, positive stress is the main factor in improving job satisfaction. Therefore, the excessive pressure experienced by a leader may result in poor leadership (Diebig, 2016).

The U-function explains the relationship between the principal's stress and the school's performance. When a principal is not aroused, he performs poorly, and when stress increases, the performance improves. However, when the amount of arousal reaches a certain threshold, performance decreases. The present study

supports that the performance at Bedouin school was a poor performance. According to Oplatka (2016) student achievement is not similar between Jewish and Arab students. The gap is wide. In addition, improvements are needed in the leadership of school principals in the Bedouin sector and in pedagogy. Moreover, improving performance in schools in the Bedouin sector is often related to understanding the stress that occurs in the school environment. Therefore, the interaction between the stress of the Bedouin school principals can significantly affect the teachers and the performance of the school. Also, positive stress enhances the emergence of leadership charisma.

Conclusion

Based on the lack of relationship between leadership style and stress, and the lack of a relationship between a principal's stress and the schools performance, it is recommended that school principals in the Bedouin sector examine how they can lead their schools through moderate stress and identify their leadership style that can contribute to performance. The lack of stress at work may reduce the productivity of the Bedouin schools. Ultimately, it leads to poor performance in schools. And in the long run, it affects students' ability to integrate into higher education. School principals in the Bedouin sector must follow their commitment to productivity and increase the level of student performance in achievement for the better. In addition, the study recommends that school principals be trained in pedagogical leadership in order to improve and increase the productivity of the schools in Bedouin.

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